Pam
Afric
East
High
112

The Miracle of Kambini

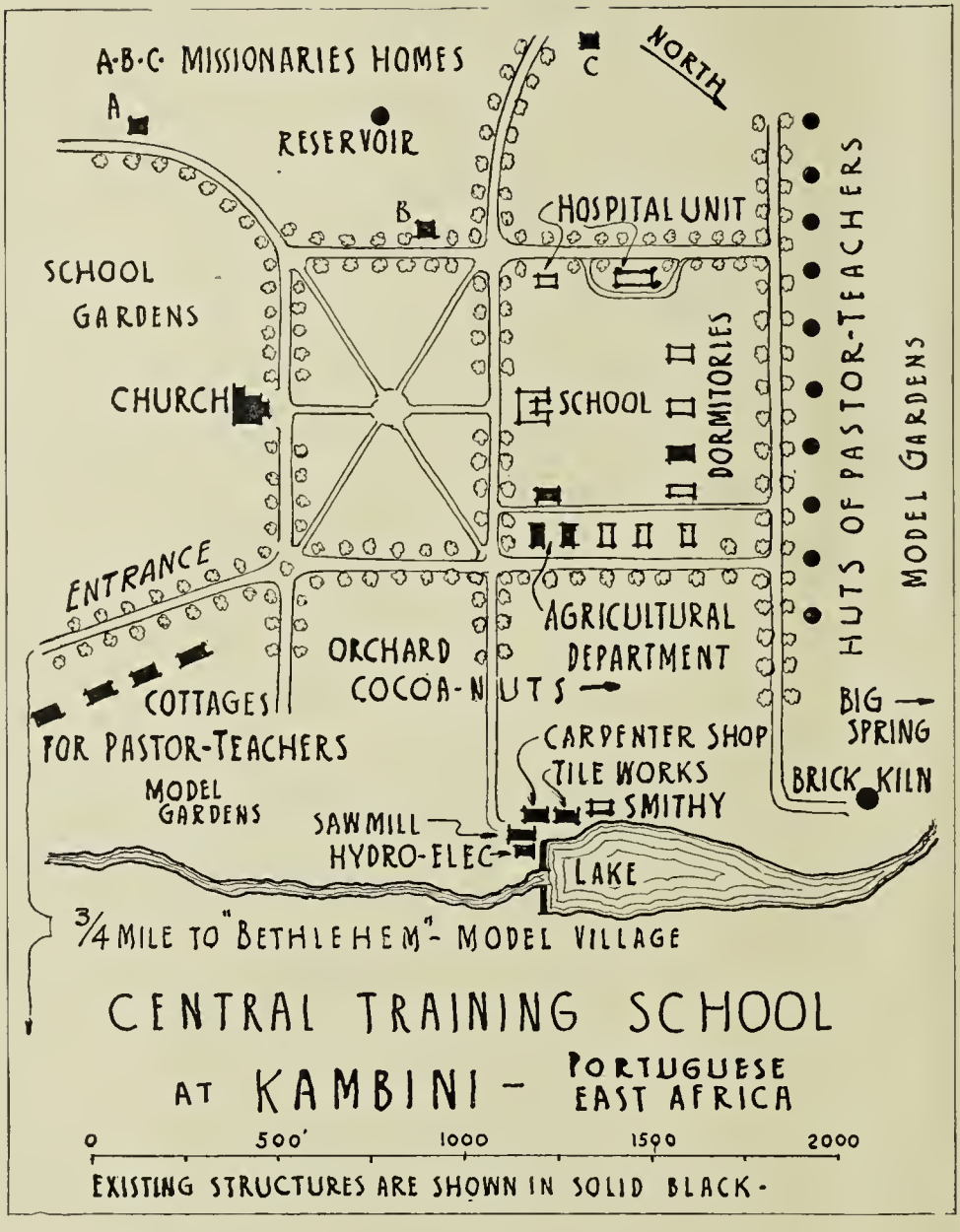
by STANLEY HIGH

1945

In a Christian Village

CENTRAL TRAINING SCHOOL
KAMBINI, PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA

n. d. before 1939



BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
150 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK

Sunday Service Under the Tamarind Tree

The Miracle of Kambini

By Stanley High

MIDWAY between Beira and Lourenco Marques, down the coast of East Africa, is the seldom-visited port of Inhambane. Tramp steamers, nosing down from Zanzibar or up from the Cape, ride, now and then, across the bar to anchor in its palm-fringed harbor. A British India supply boat calls once a month, and sea-stained Portuguese nondescripts come in and out with no schedule or apparent purpose. Inhambane is no place for visitors. But it is a place worth visiting. Beyond it, over thirty miles of jungle road, is Kambini. And Kambini is a miracle.

I went to Kambini prepared for anything but miracles. The road from the coast was a trail of sand cut through a tangled forest. Our Ford truck steamed and groaned and, with infrequent spurts, covered the distance in a scant three hours. There

was heat—the African sort that bakes down from above and boils up from below and blows in with every wind. There were Africans. They peered out at us from behind the unlovely huts of their thatched-roof villages, or scurried ahead like frightened animals to dive out of sight into the bush as we, with our roaring machine, overtook them.

Everything "in the Raw"

Men here lived close to nature and both, clearly, were in the raw. I was skeptical. I wondered why missionaries, in the first place, ever went to so remote a spot; how, in the second place, they went about their work among a people so hopelessly primitive; and, finally, what possible things they could accomplish to make it worth their while to stay.

Kambini took care of my skepticism. It answered my questions. And I left with a pocket of notes on a practical, modern miracle.

In the beginning, however, Kambini was a laboratory rather than a miracle. The opportunity for such a laboratory was apparent to the missionaries who first came to this place some twenty years ago. They found a fertile valley where they promptly obtained a clear title to 1200 acres of land—as rich land as could be found in this part of East Africa. A tiny river, fed from never-failing springs, flowed through it. Along the banks of this stream there were several hills of gray limestone. Back a little from the valley the forest closed in—a forest where, in addition to the inevitable palm trees, there were ample supplies of mahogany, African teak and other hard-woods.

Here was the physical equipment for the sort of laboratory that the missionaries desired to establish.

The human equipment was not lacking. Out through the bush, within a few miles radius, there were scores of villages. By day the natives flocked into this valley to eye the newcomers cautiously. By night, with their rythmic and incessant tom-toms, they whirled through tribal dances that the spirits might be induced to furnish some protection against these strange invaders.

Beginning Christian Work

Missionary work—there was none. Nor were there any Christians. Portuguese officials, now and then, made a tax-gathering round of the larger villages. Labor recruiters, with greater frequency, herded the men off to work on the roads or to join the great army of their fellow natives who dug the white man's gold in Johannesburg.

Here, then, were facilities and folks. Whereupon the missionary, with the equipment that his faith provided, set about it to use the facilities for the benefit of the folks. He dreamed of what it might mean to East Africa to carry on, in this fertile valley, a demonstration that the African could be clean, that he could be industrious, that he could study and learn, that he could live righteously and shape his personal and village ideals after those of Christ. And Kambini — in particular the Central Training School of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Kambini—is the result.

The Missionaries at Kambini

First, a word as to what the missionaries did with the physical facilities. One among them is a practical engineer. He built a brick kiln and began to quarry building stone from the hills. He discovered a miniature falls on the river that flowed through the farm. Aid from home made it possible for him to harness those falls. A small electric light and power plant was installed. A sawmill went up. A hydraulic ram was installed and water pumped up the hill to irrigate the garden plot a third of a mile away.

Another missionary, who arrived later on the field, is an agriculturist. He went over the 1200 acre farm. More aid from home and he began its cultivation with modern methods; plows and a tractor—the first in this corner of the world; good seed; crop rotation.

The third missionary is an educator. Under his direction Kambini has become a Training School for the preparation of native leaders. The students who come are nominated by the quarterly conferences of the East African Conference of the Methodist Church. The new arrivals are enrolled in the regular four-year classes. The curriculum taught there is provided by the Portuguese Government. At the end of the four years the students go up for the government examinations which, if passed, entitle them to teachers' certificates.

Then, having finished the government requirements, the students, if they choose, go on to the Normal Training Department—the Kambini Teachers' College. Here, in a two-year course, they are prepared for village teaching.

A third group is directed into the Theological Department. The Kambini pastors-to-be are either graduates of the Central

A Teacher and His Class

Training School or sent up directly from the quarterly conferences. Theology—it is much more than that at Kambini—is a three-year course. From its graduates the Christian evangelists for this territory are recruited.

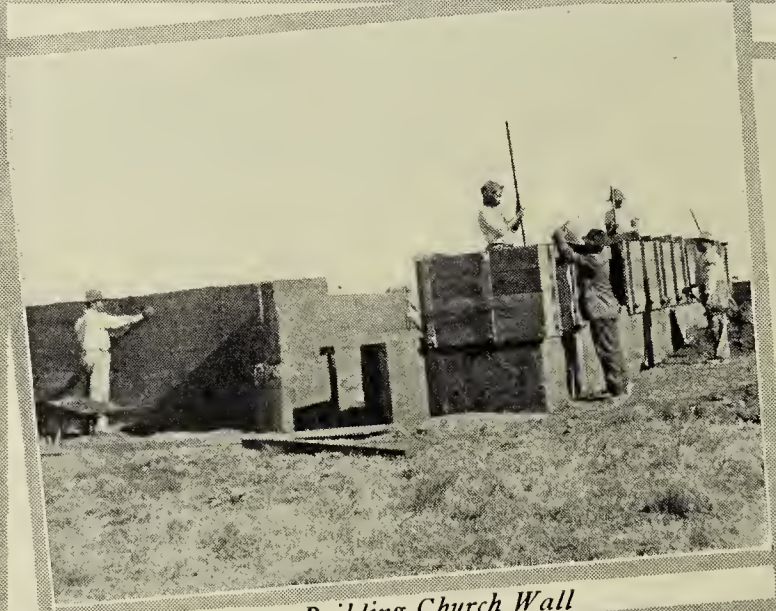
But this is the merest outline. The real story of Kambini is not found in the industries or the farm or the schools, themselves, but in the way they operate together and in what they are producing.

Preparation for Service

Take the students in the theological school, for example. Most of them come to Kambini with families. Self-support is a necessity for them. The lessons of self-support are essential to their leadership. Consequently, in the first year, they are put to work. There are no rice Christians among them. In the first few months they are given some aid. But after the first crops—

The Women Pound Grain

The Sunday



Boys Building Church Wall

Pastors and

hool Class

The Missionary Vaccinates

Tir Dormitory

Attacking a Teak Log

that they help to cultivate—are harvested they are self-supporting: made self-supporting under the leadership of the agricultural missionary on the farm that he manages.

The missionary in charge of the industries also has a hand in their practical preparation. He teaches them to make brick; to weave baskets; to build houses; to tan hides.

And their wives, at the same time, are taught to read and write, to sew, to care for children; in short, to provide that kind of domestic example and leadership that Africa so sorely needs.

Pastor-Teacher-Builder-Doctor-Farmer

When the evangelist goes out to preach, therefore, he is at once a center for a new type of life in the village. He preaches on Sunday—and very effective preaching it is, too. And the remaining six days of the week he is at a variety of odd, but significant jobs. He helps his parishioners to build better homes. He teaches them the importance of cleanliness. His wife sets up a crude dispensary and becomes the town's physician. His little field is well-tilled and what he has learned at Kambini makes it possible to give the other villagers essential lessons in the business of agriculture.

The Christian evangelism sent out from Kambini becomes, thus, an agency for the community-wide transformation of his primitive parish.

The other departments of the Central Training School are as practically important as this. The work of the "undergraduate" school is, just now, being put upon a twelve-month basis. The student body is divided into family groups. Each group has its own houses, its own bit of farmland to cultivate, and its own garden to tend, and is self-supporting. For one term the

students, in addition to the prescribed school work, will learn carpentry; for another, masonry; a third term will be spent in actual teaching in a village school. Government in the school will be in the hands of a council, one member being selected from each family group.

The Christian Villages

The leadership of these Kambini-trained men is apparent in the Christian villages that are growing up under their direction. The African native is not tied to one piece of ground as are the farmers of India or China. He moves frequently. When he becomes a Christian, instead of remaining in his non-Christian surrounding, he pulls up, with bag, baggage and family, and moves to a Christian village. These villages are a mark of the kind of Africa that the missionary purposes to build. Kambini exists in order that this Christian company can be increased and that the communities, where they live, can more worthily bear the name of Christian.

As it is, a vast gulf separates the Christian from the non-Christian village. There are wide streets. Houses are clean. The fields well-tilled. The children attend school. The little home-built church is crowded on Sunday and at night at the evening vesper services held after the villagers return from their day in the fields. Drunkenness and indolence, disease and cruelty—marks of non-Christian villages—are driven out. And non-Christian Africans, passing these places, come to understand what manner of life it is that the missionary has brought to the land.

The actual, next-to-the-people work in these Christian villages is, of course, entirely in the hands of the native teachers and preachers trained in schools like Kambini. And these men constitute the best apologetic for the missionary's work.

Davida's Story

My guide, on several bush trail trips near Kambini, was Davida Maperre, pastor of the church in the little Christian village of Bethlehem, nearby. On one of these trips I asked Davida how and why he had become a Christian.

"It is very simple," he said. "My father was a witch doctor. I was his assistant. We pounded drums. We shouted. But our kraal—with all these things—was full of misery and suffering.

"One day my uncle came to visit us. He explained how he had found a Greater Spirit. We were all greatly interested. I determined to find this Greater Spirit and left my own kraal for a Christian village. There I have lived ever since and now my parents, with my brothers and sisters, have all become Christian. Africa, some day, will leave its own kraals for others where this Greater Spirit is."

There has been nothing easy in Davida's religion. In three years he lost his four children. Non-Christians who knew him in the old witchcraft days came to his home. They sought to show him that this was a visitation from the tribal gods; that now he must abandon the new faith. They pleaded and threatened. But Davida refused to surrender. He explained what the new gospel meant to him in his sorrow. He told them of the Greater Spirit that had made him and might make them different Africans.

"I couldn't let the opportunity pass," he said afterward. "Those men needed my testimony. They need the Lord whom I have learned to serve."

Larger Staff Needed

But Kambini is hampered. The opportunity has grown by leaps and bounds. Resources to meet the opportunity have

Davida Maperre and Family

lagged. The missionaries who saw how effective a Christian demonstration Kambini might be, have worked on in the face of great odds. Three missionary families carry the entire work; training school, theological school, normal school, agricultural work, industrial classes, dispensary service, in addition to the multitude of smaller tasks that are a part of the administration of every such enterprise.

Pile of Brick and Stone

Further, Kambini is handicapped for lack of equipment. When I visited the place a great pile of home-made brick and home-quarried stone was piled at one side of the compound.

"What is that?" I asked.

"That," said the missionary, "is our church. At present we worship under the tamarind tree over there. One of these days

we will have a church—when funds for its completion come from home."

But that pile of brick and stone is symbolic. It stands for the Kambini that may be built. The equipment—material and human—is at hand. Natives, as never before, are seeking admittance. Villages, as never before, are demanding leadership. Kambini will train the natives and provide the leadership if and when Americans give practical proof of their belief in such a program.

The Central Training School at Kambini, as I have said, started out as a laboratory. But it has become a miracle. It is a miracle of the sort that appears whenever the gospel of Jesus Christ is given fair trial in the lives of men and in their relationships. A vast area in Portuguese East Africa awaits upon our support for the extension of that miracle working power.

Kambini

Kambini is 30 miles inland from Inhambane, an important coast city of the Inhambane district of Portuguese East Africa. Inhambane is on the Indian Ocean—"across from Madagascar." From some points in Kambini the Ocean is visible.

Kambini and Inhambane form part of the southeast Africa Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This Conference has a population of 2,000,000. Of this number 800,000 are in Inhambane District. The two principal African tribes here are the Batswa and the Batonga. The entire Scriptures have been translated into Sheetswa and the New Testament into Gitonga, the languages of these tribes.

Central Training School in Kambini is the leading institution of the Methodist Episcopal Church in this whole conference territory in training pastors, and teachers, and in providing leaders for the growing agricultural and industrial activities of the native peoples.

Serving at Kambini

To help in the development and maintenance of the Central Training School in Kambini your gifts—large or small—are requested. Here are a few suggestions of definite items for which gifts may be assigned if you so request the Board of Foreign Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, (Morris W. Ehnes, treasurer) 150 Fifth Avenue, New York:

$1,000 will erect one of the four new dormitories.

$500 will equip a dormitory.

$1,000 will provide the cost of a classroom in either the theological, the normal, or the school building; eight such rooms are required. These rooms may be given as memorials, if desired.

$500 will equip one of the eight classrooms.

$1,000 will provide a building for agricultural instruction.

$2,000 will provide equipment for agricultural experiments, teaching, etc.

$2,000 will provide a medical clinic.

$500 will equip the clinic for service.

$4,000 will provide a missionary residence; two are needed.

$1,500 will provide a water system.

$150 will provide a home for a pastor-teacher; 20 are needed.

$3,000 per annum will give the School a new missionary family, and provide their travel and medical costs ($1,500 for a single missionary).

$1,500 per annum will provide for a missionary-nurse at the clinic.

$50 per annum will provide a scholarship in the higher classes; 65 are needed.

$25 per annum will provide a partial scholarship; 30 are needed.

Units of $100 will give the donor a share in any of the new buildings.

Gifts may be made by individuals, by churches, by Sunday schools, by Epworth Leagues; but they should be in addition to present giving. World Service credit will be given, if the donor so desires.

ANNUITIES

The annuity plan of the Board of Foreign Missions makes it possible for a donor to secure an investment and a guaranteed income, probably above prevailing interest rates, and provides at the same time a gift to help advance the Kingdom of God. Such a gift, drawing income for the donor during his or her life, can be designated for any mission field or work of the Board of Foreign Missions. Write for full information regarding annuities or regarding gifts to mission work through bequests in wills, to Morris W. Ehnes, treasurer, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York City.